

Charles Hamilton Houston

Mr. Houston, prominent legal counsel to the NAACP and Dean of Howard University's Law School, argued Commonwealth vs. Crawford in the 1894 courthouse. It was one of the most important cases in the Civil Rights movement. His legal team fought in 1933 against the segregated jury process and ability to get a fair trial by a jury of one's peers.

Charles Hamilton Houston (Image courtesy of the Thomas Balch Library)



A close-up of a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "Charles H. Houston". The signature is written on a piece of aged, yellowish paper. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line and the typed text "Attorneys for defendant.".

Commonwealth vs. Crawford, CR1832-90

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA

OCTOBER TERM, 1933.

Commonwealth of Virginia

Plaintiff

vs

George Crawford

Defendant

MOTION TO QUASH

To The Honorable CIRCUIT COURT OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA:

Now comes the above-named defendant, George Crawford, a Negro, a member of the colored race and a person of African descent, into court by his attorney, Charles H. Houston, and moves the court for an order quashing the indictment returned into said court by the Grand Jury in and for the body of the County of Loudoun, Commonwealth of Virginia, at the February Term of the Circuit Court of Loudoun County, Virginia, in the year of Our Lord one thousand, nine hundred and thirty-three, wherein by said indictment the aforesaid George Crawford, defendant herein, was charged with the murder of Mina Buckner, on the grounds and for the reason following, to-wit:

That by law then in force the Judge of the Circuit Court in Loudoun County was charged with the duty of selecting forty-eight male citizens of said County of specified qualifications, as the grand jury list from which the Clerk of said Circuit Court should issue the venire for the grand jury of the particular term; that the said Judge did select the jury list from which the clerk issued the venire for the grand jury returning the indictment aforesaid, and in selecting said list did unlawfully exclude therefrom all Negroes, members of the colored race and of African descent, to serve as grand jurors, solely on account of their color and race; and that by reason of the unlawful exclusion of qualified Negroes from said grand jury list, there could not be and were not any Negroes on the venire for said grand jury returning the indictment, and no Negroes on said grand jury; but said grand jury was composed entirely of persons of the white race, notwithstanding the fact that there were numerous Negroes in said Loudoun County fully qualified for said grand jury service; and that said unlawful exclusion was and is greatly to the prejudice of defendant herein, who is himself a Negro.

Wherefore he prays that the said indictment be quashed.

George Crawford
by Charles H. Houston
Attorney for Defendant.

GEORGE CRAWFORD TALKS

Our Editor Meets Our Etta



Our newest and brightest star of the stage, screen, and radio is Etta Norton, golden-voiced daughter of a Kansas minister who chose a career that carried her to Broadway's footlights and Hollywood's floodlights, and now is carrying her to radio's ether waves, where T. Theatre, at which "Flying Down to Rio," in which she is starred, is showing. In the above picture Editor P. B. Young, Sr., the Journal and Guide is shown welcoming her to the city Sunday (in on behalf of its citizens, who have given her a royal reception.

Journal and Guide

★★ A Newspaper that is FIRST in its Field - in Readers - in News and in Advertising ★★

VOL. XXXIV NO. 6

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1934

Price 7 CENTS IN NORFOLK
FORTHRIGHT AND TIDEWATER 10 CENTS
ELSEWHERE

NATIONAL EDITION

Plan to Oust More Hampton Teachers

BISHOP GRACE HELD ON MANN ACT

Crawford Is Not Satisfied With His Trial

Accident Victim

Students to Ask Removal Of Inefficient Staff Members; Petitions Being Prepared

CWA Assistant

YOUNG GIRL IS ACCUSER OF PREACHER

Objects To Failure To Call Witnesses For Defense

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Again Denies Guilt; Thinks Lawyers Did Their Best

Editorial Page Now 16

Discrimination I CWA BANNED 'N.C. GOVERNOR

Share Institute Attracts Many To Raleigh

James Moore, 22-year-old Union University student, who was fatally injured early Sunday morning when an automobile in which he was a passenger, ran off the Little Creek Road near Lincoln Park, and crashed into a tree.

DRIVER OF DEATH

Hampton, Va.—The administration of Hampton Institute, it was learned this week, will be petitioned by the students as soon as plans are complete for the removal of certain faculty and staff members held to be inefficient by the students.

According to reports of the list now being drawn up by a committee of the Student Council, of which Louis Shulerbrandt is president, several staff members, the bone of contention, are to be protested.

The decision to present the petition is an indirect outgrowth of the dismissal of Miss Wilhelmina Patterson by President Arthur Howe on January 3.

At a student meeting held in Ogden Hall, Saturday, January 7, the decision to draw up and circulate the petition came after Shulerbrandt and other student speakers had argued against the growing sentiment for a protest strike.

students, appeared asking why there were not more Negroes employed at the school. In part, the letter read as follows:

Hampton, according to what I know about it, has always been a place where both races live together in harmony. I don't think that any thinking graduate, or undergraduate either, would be in favor of Hampton's having an all-colored faculty. Still I can't see why certain positions here can not be filled by colored people.

No Colored Secretaries

"Your first question should be, 'What positions do you refer to?' Well, Hampton has a business school, one of the finest in the country, white or colored. But I don't see many secretarial positions around here being held down by colored girls.

"Last year one of Hampton's most prominent students graduated from the industrial arts department. Throughout the semester there has been asked the question of why he was not given a position of merit position, who had

Special to Journal and Guide

BROOKLYN, N. Y. — Chas. Manuel Grace, 25-year-old, a styled barber of the House Prayer for All People, drove Federal Court Monday on a charge of kidnapping.

Commonwealth vs. Crawford- Final Verdict
Commom Law Book 15 1933-1936, Page 141-42

141

upon the said George Crawford was remanded to the custody of the Sheriff of this County and by him to be delivered to the jail at Alexandria and to be returned to Court tomorrow morning at 9.30 o'clock.

Ordered that Court be adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.30 o'clock.

James L. McHenry

Saturday, December 16, 1933

The orders of yesterday were read and signed.

Commonwealth or Virginia vs George Crawford. Upon an indictment for a felony #1.

The prisoner, George Crawford, who stands indicted for a felony #1 was this day again set to the bar in the custody of the Sheriff of this County and the jury sworn on the trial of this case on Wednesday this day returned into Court in the custody of the deputy Sheriffs of this County pursuant to adjournment. The defendant moved the Court to strike out the evidence of the Commonwealth on the grounds and for the reasons following, to wit:

1. That the proof varies from the allegations of the indictment.
2. That the evidence offered on behalf of the Commonwealth is insufficient to sustain the indictment as shown.
3. That all the evidence offered on behalf of the Commonwealth is immaterial and irrelevant to the issues framed upon the said indictment and defendant's plea of "not guilty" entered thereto.

which motion was opposed by the attorney for the Commonwealth. Upon consideration by the Court the said motion was rejected and to which ruling of the Court, the defendant, by counsel, excepted.

The jury heaving heard the evidence retired to their rooms to consider of the verdict and after sometime returned into Court and upon their oaths do say, "We the jury in the case of Commonwealth of Virginia vs one George Crawford find the defendant guilty as charged in the indictment and fix his punishment at confinement in the penitentiary for the term of his natural life," H. C. Thompson, Foreman. Thereupon the defendant, George Crawford by counsel moved the Court to set aside the verdict of the jury and grant him a new trial on the grounds that the said verdict is contrary to the evidence, against the evidence and with no evidence to support^{it} and because of erroneous rulings by the Court during the progress of the trial, because of the admission of certain instructions offered by the Commonwealth and because of the refusal of certain other instructions offered by the defendant and because of the overruling of the motion to quash the said indictment as heretofore set out in the record and the refusal to allow the plea of abatement to the said indictment as filed therewith and for the refusal to sustain the motion

to quash the 104 veniremen for the reasons as heretofore set out in the record, which motion was overruled to which ruling the defendant by counsel excepted. Thereupon the defendant having been asked by the Court if there was any reason he knew why sentence should not be pronounced upon him at this time, and the defendant having stated there was no reason why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, it is therefore considered by the Court that the said George Crawford be confined in the penitentiary of this State for the term of his natural life and to that end he is committed into the custody of Lieutenant H. B. Nicholas, State Police to be transported by him to the Henrico County Jail, 22nd. & Main Streets, Richmond, Virginia, to remain there for a period of 30 days in order to furnish his counsel sufficient time in which to perfect an appeal to the Court of Appeal of the State of Virginia or until further order of this Court.

It is ordered that on December 16, 1933, the Keeper of the Henrico County Jail, 22nd. & Main Streets, Richmond, Virginia, will receive for safe keeping when delivered to him by E. S. Adrian, Sheriff of Loudoun County, Virginia, or from a regularly appointed deputy or deputies of the said E. S. Adrian, Sheriff of this County, or by Lieu. H. B. Nicholas, State Police, the body of George Crawford, who has this day been convicted by a jury of the County of Loudoun, Virginia, of murder of one Agnes Boeing Ilsley, on January 13th, 1932. And it is further ordered that the said George Crawford be held thereun until further orders are issued in this case.

Ordered that it be certified to the Board of Supervisors of this County that James L. McLemore, Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit be allowed for presiding over this Court to hear the case of Commonwealth of Virginia vs George Crawford upon an indictment for a felony #1 on the 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 days of December, 1933, the sum of \$44.00 for mileage and \$10.00 for each day for holding Court and \$23.50 hotel bill, making a total of \$117.50 which \$117.50 the Board of Supervisors is ordered to pay.

Ordered that Court be adjourned under December 18, the day of adjournment by J. R. H. Alexander, Judge of Circuit Court of Loudoun County.

James L. McLemore,